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The real issue before the church

Philadelphia

1916

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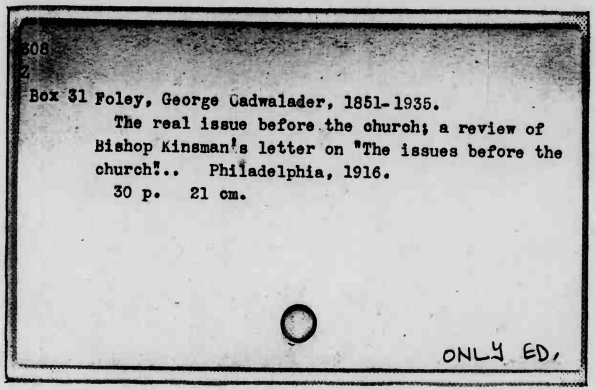
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The Real Issue Before the Church

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A REVIEW OF BISHOP KINSMAN'S LETTER ON
"THE ISSUES BEFORE THE CHURCH"

BY THE REVEREND
GEORGE CADWALADER FOLEY, S.T.D.

On Sale by
GEORGE W. JACOBS & CO.
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Philadelphia
1916

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The Real Issue Before the Church

The Occasion

On St. Andrew's Day, 1915, the Bishop of Delaware addressed a letter to the clergy of his diocese, entitled, "The Issues Before the Church." This was privately printed, and distributed to those concerned; and it is exceedingly difficult to procure a copy of it. Within a month afterward, apparently, a second edition was published and put on sale, with the imprint of "Edwin S. Gorham, 1915." The body of the letter, with the exception of one long paragraph, is practically the same in both editions. There is, however, one striking contrast: an appendix of eighteen pages, constituting exactly one-third of the entire pamphlet, which appeared in the first and private edition, is wholly omitted in the second. Its withdrawal we can construe only as an acknowledgment of an amazing indiscretion. As this pastoral has been commended in some high quarters as a "momentous utterance;" as it is so outspoken, so challenging, even so menacing in its expression of purpose, we think it merits a brief review. In our references, we shall confine ourselves to the first edition.

I

The Panama Episode

The letter is concerned with the issues raised by the action of the Board of Missions on the Panama question. We agree with the bishop in regarding that matter as purely incidental to a larger controversy. The "perplexity and disturbance" occasioned by the discussions are not due to the Board's action, as such. They are only symptoms of an unrest created by an aggressive campaign to change the historic position of our Church by altering its formularies, or, failing that, to read into the existing standards ideas which they were expressly framed to exclude. Our author claims that the Board "*defied* the House of Bishops in which this proposal [to co-operate] had been vetoed" (p. 5). But the episcopal delegates chosen by the Board were explicitly instructed not to commit the Church to any policy of co-operation. There is no question here of defiance; it is simply a difference of opinion between the majority of the Board and some bishops and clergy as to the propriety of even conferring with other Protestant missionaries.

Panama not the Issue

The bishop considers that there has been "raised a question of lawful authority in the Church, and in particular, of the authority of the collective episcopate (7)." He insists that the episcopate is not only "the upper (!) House of General Convention," but the representative of "the principle of derivative authority, not confined to the episcopate,

but shared by the whole ministry." But derived from whence? In his "Principles of Anglicanism," he says that it would have been better if the Quadrilateral had specified the Historic Church instead of the Historic Episcopate; and that "the difference between the clergy and the laity is not one of character but of function." Exactly so: the authority belongs to the Church as a whole, and only functions in the officials. In determining any ecclesiastical question, the bishops are simply one co-ordinate branch of our legislature; their authority is strictly limited by the constitution. In the expression of opinion on administrative policy, their authority is derived from no special endowment of knowledge or understanding: it is no more than that of the aggregate of wisdom possessed by the individual members of the House.

The Church, not the Bishops

The bishop is more reasonable in his claim that the Board "has seemed to ignore the very important point of view" stated in the pamphlet (35). It is not indeed true that theirs was "an act distinctly hostile to the Roman Catholic Church" (3). It was, however, a recognition that "Roman Catholic territory is a proper field for Protestant missionary endeavor" (4), on account of the lamentable failure of the Roman Church in many countries to prevent the people from lapsing into semi-paganism. Much is made by Bishop Anderson of the fact that South America is "professedly Christian;" but the profession is unhappily too largely belied by the facts of the demoralization of South American social life.

To intrude upon the jurisdiction of this very nominal Christianity is contrary to the principles which the Bishop of Delaware holds dear. The action of the Board "has raised no new questions; it has simply forced them to the front" (9). As his comments relate more to the "principles involved" than to "details of the action in itself" (1). Let us address ourselves to an examination of some of these principles.

II

Protestantism versus Catholicism

He reduces the points in controversy to one issue: is the Church Catholic or Protestant? He puts the two ideas in radical antithesis, and then endeavors to make out his case by a severe arraignment of the logical tendencies of Protestantism. The reader cannot fail to remark the rigor of his criticism of "Evangelical Germany" and of Congregationalist New England, and the lenity and tenderness which he displays towards Catholicism. He exposes at length the defects of the one movement, and is almost completely silent about the bigotry and ignorance and superstition and immorality so often characterizing the other. Even if he thinks the Anglican Communion to be Catholic and not Protestant, fairness would demand that he recognize that even the great word "Catholic" has some ill-omened connotations.

A One-Sided Estimate

Misled by such words as "logical" and "tendency," he quotes "one of the bishops" as saying that "the goal of Protestantism is atheism." He makes that frightful statement his own by such words as these: "God is a supernatural authority; and in the end God has to go" (18); "a principle of opposition to authority, and to the supernatural, which [tends to] do away not only with the Church but with God" (23). Shutting his eyes to the manifold tokens of the grace of God, he says: "Worship and prayer so-called (!) have ceased to be conscious of the presence of God" (19)! If all this "dechristianizing tendency" (20) be true, why should he express such sympathy and admiration for the Presbyterians? He has never "known any but good ones." He says, they "include the best people I have known anywhere. . . . In some communities . . . they represent the strongest element for good, a stronger element than the Episcopalians. . . . I acknowledge that their religious system is good, because I know its fruits in work and character" (27). But if Protestant religion is so vital—and none can gainsay it—how does this comport with its "dechristianizing tendencies?" How can a religious system be good, when worship has lost the sense of the presence of God, when its goal is atheism? Either Protestants are not logical, or the description of their tendency is mere rhetoric. We prefer the latter alternative.

Tendency to Atheism

We cannot admit for a moment that the consistent Protestant must inevitably do away with God,

any more than we admit that the consistent Romanist must inevitably be immoral. There are not a few Protestants who have gone astray from the Catholic faith; on the other hand, there are not a few Romanists who have repudiated the Christian life. It is only partly true that Protestants have failed adequately to safeguard the faith; just as it is only partly true that Romanists have failed to protect morality. But the indictment against the latter is just as valid as the one he draws against the former, and even more ominously suggestive; especially as, according to the bishop, the Romanists are Catholic. If there are thousands of saintly lives in the Latin communion, so there are thousands of orthodox believers among Protestants.

A Dialectical Device

The fact is, the use of the word "Protestant*ism*" in this connection is a mere dialectical device; one may strongly espouse Protestant principles, without being involved in all that is implied in an "ism." The same may be said of Catholicism. His argument is no more legitimate than to make the practical results of four centuries of Catholicism in South America the logical tendency of a Catholic Church. Beyond doubt, there have been disintegrating forces in the Protestant world; but, in the name of truth, have there been none in the Catholic? Why should we have such a one-sided presentation of the unhappy tendencies of Protestantism, and such a manifest unwillingness to disclose the still worse tendencies of Catholicism? Is it conceivable that a Protestant Episcopal bishop

Is it Conceivable?

thinks the latter of negligible consequence as compared with the former?

There is no need to exhibit the invigorating influence of Protestantism. That is manifest in the enlightenment, the literacy, and the moral tone of the social life affected by it. The bishop makes much of the sceptical spirit of Germany. Yet Germany has only one per cent illiterate, and Catholic Austria has twenty-three per cent. In Holland four per cent are illiterate, in England five, while in Spain there are sixty-eight, and in Brazil eighty-five. There is only one country in Europe, where ten per cent or less of the population cannot read, which is not Protestant. Shall we be told that this is offset by the piety and the simple faith of the Roman Catholic nations? For the whole implication of the bishop's argument is that to be Protestant is to run the risk of losing the faith, while the Catholic preserves it. But a census of the thousands of students in the universities of Brazil reveals only four per cent accepting any religion whatever. The report just made to the Panama Congress shows such an alarming spread of unbelief throughout the southern republics as to threaten a complete collapse of Christianity there. In Bolivia, three-fourths of the members of Congress, and of well-to-do business men, and nearly all the Government students, are unbelievers. Dr. Robert E. Speer, at Panama, quoted from a letter of a Brazilian professor of law as symptomatic of the entire situation: "There is no longer confidence in the Christian dogma. The

"God a Myth!"

supernatural has been banished from the domain of science. God is a myth. . . . The simple spirit refrains from all criticisms and accepts the idea of God without resistance. The cultured spirit repels the idea in virtue of its contradictions." It is obvious that being a Catholic no more tends to maintain the faith than being a Protestant. And that this is no partisan conclusion is evidenced by what the Roman Catholic bishop of Sao Paolo says of his own country: "Brazil has no longer any faith. Religion is almost extinct here."

Moreover, there is no Catholic country in the world except Ireland where the social morality is elevated. It may be said that it is never elevated elsewhere, unless it is sustained by a Protestant public opinion. No Protestant need shrink from the most rigid comparison. If testimony is desired with reference to those countries which are the present bone of contention, and their neighbors, let us appeal to the Abbé Dominic, chaplain to the Emperor Maximilian, who said that "Mexican Christianity was and had been from the beginning of the Spanish conquest, a baptized heathenism." The Archbishop of Caracas characterized the situation in Venezuela as marked by "impotence, sterility, decadence, moral and spiritual." Father Sherman said of Porto Rico: "Religion is dead on the island . . . the number of illegitimate exceeds that of the legitimate . . . the priesthood among whom concubinage is the rule and not the exception . . . the ethical status of the Roman Church, sunk lower oftentimes than the atheism which surrounds it."

Now we might contrast with this the intelligence, the liberty of conscience, the genuine spirituality of religion, which are to be found in most Protestant countries. It will be said that such a comparison is as one-sided as the bishop's. What we contend for is that, if the mode of argument adopted by the bishop be just, this side may not be quietly ignored—when it stands for the proud results won by so much sacrifice and the hopes of the civilization to come. Over against his theoretical description of the logical goal of Protestantism—which is neither the general tendency nor the actual experience of the vast majority of those who call themselves by that name, we place the actual practical issue of Catholicism in those countries where it has had undisputed sway for centuries, and every opportunity of exhibiting its logical goal. As matter of fact, we dispute the "inevitable logic" of either contention; though we should not hesitate to express our preference for the best fruits of the Protestant spirit over even the best fruits of the Catholic, when concretely wrought out in the history of nations. We present the other side chiefly to exhibit the utter baselessness of the bishop's method of proof.

Roman Episcopacy Presbyterian

Why should we feel nearer to the Roman Catholic on account of his historic ministry, than to the Presbyterian with his manifest endowments from the Spirit of all grace? It might even be asked, why should we call the Roman ministry Catholic at all, instead of Presbyterian; when its three "holy" orders of priest, deacon and sub-deacon, with the

episcopate only a "degree" of the priesthood, are in such vital contrast to the historic and primitive form retained by our own Church? We may let that pass, and return to the matter of sympathy and outlook, which seems to involve such a misplacement of emphasis. A ministry is a necessity to the organization of a Church, but not to its existence. In any case, it gets all its significance as ministrant to life. If a familiar figure is insisted on, it is not organization which creates life, but the opposite. Life is the supreme point of emphasis; organization is subordinate, and to make it otherwise is poor spiritual biology. Even if we admit that the organization which the life of the Church has developed is the best conceivable, still it is the Divine spirit of discipleship which is the essential thing, and the true exponent of the life of a Christian Church. A ministry which is perfectly regular, but which does not foster such life, is not in any intrinsic sense a valid ministry. Bishop Gore has said: "If I am to judge by the fruits of religion as I see them in life, I should be disposed to rank the Friends among the highest in the Kingdom of God, and they have no ministry and no sacraments" (*The Basis of Anglican Fellowship*, 40). No one will suspect Bishop Gore of disparaging either; but he recognizes the distinction between the Kingdom and the Church, and he sees that the *fundamental* test of the Christian fellowship is life. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The converse of this, which is equally

Life before Organization

true, is the Divinely appointed guide to our sympathies.

We have not the slightest wish to minimize the authority or the truth of the wonderful creed, which was wrought out by the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries. But we have totally misunderstood the Spirit of Christ, if He would not have been drawn more to a man of imperfect formula but devoted love to Himself, than to one of unimpeachable orthodoxy who refused His lordship. We have His own word that, if we do not the things He says, to profess the faith by calling Him Lord is vitally meaningless. There is a real relation between truth and living. But the life that exhibits the fruits of the Spirit implicitly confesses the truth; while the utterance of the noblest formula of truth that has no effect on living is nothing more than a mental, or perhaps verbal, assent to theological propositions. After all, we must admit that we are saved by faith, not by orthodoxy, important as it is. We find among most Protestants a sincere adherence to the essentials of Christianity; and we find that Romanists have added many alien beliefs which have overlaid and obscured the original simplicity of the Gospel. It seems to us mere externalism to imagine unity as more possible in the direction of Rome, because of a form of ministry, than of Protestantism.

III

Catholic versus Protestant

Both types of Churchmanship are admitted to exist in "the history of Anglicanism in all periods and stages" (10); but the "confusing double witness" is a handicap, in the opinion of the bishop. "'Catholic' and 'Protestant' are not the same thing; and a Church must be either the one thing or the other" (12). His conclusion is that we are Catholic, not Protestant. However, Archbishop Benson, a staunch High Churchman, said that not one of the words characterizing our communion, "Apostolic, Catholic, Reformed and Protestant," could be spared, and that the present is a time when it is specially necessary to lay emphasis on the last word (*Archbp. Benson in Ireland,* 110f.). At least one notable exemplar of the Bishop's own school, then, believes we can be both; and indeed the proposed dilemma does not exist.

And *not* Or

It is certainly time to object to the vicious modern misuse of the word "catholic." It is stretched to cover all sorts of ideas and practices which cannot claim any authorization from pronouncements by the Church universal. It matters not how general and long continued a form of thought may be. That may furnish strong presumption in its favor; but it is not catholic unless the Church has formally and officially enounced it and the subsequent assent of the Christian world has endorsed it. There may be a *fact* of such wide prevalence as to constitute

a practically unescapable authority; but *theories* as to the meaning of that fact occupy an altogether inferior status. We may retain our regard for the historic value of the fact, without at all assenting to the validity of the theories imposed upon it. For example, a certain mode of transmitting the ministry is a demonstrable fact for the greater part of Christian history. Although, in tracing back this succession, we come to a time when we are reminded of the last step in Huxley's proof of evolution, which he calls "an act of philosophic faith:" solid ground up to a certain point, and then a leap into the unknown, an assumption.*

But it is quite a different thing to claim Catholic authority for theories as to what is involved in that transmission.

The bishop's remarkable expansion of the Quadrilateral affords an interesting illustration of what is meant. Three of the sides will be generally acceded to, and the acceptance of the fourth is quite within the range of practical politics. The Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments, offer not the slightest bar to reunion. The Historic Episcopate (which *The Living Church* desires to see replaced by the Historic Priesthood) is by no means insuperable. But the bishop links the last two in this way: "The Sacraments, representing the extension of the Incarnate Son's ministry of grace, through a sacramental Ministry, as instrument of His discipline and authority" (16). Now

A Strange Paraphrase

*The reader will find a candid statement to this effect in Bishop John Wordsworth's "The Ministry of Grace," p. 142.

it hardly need be pointed out that the Church has said nothing of the sort; that is the private interpretation of the bishop. That may be what he means by sacraments and episcopate; but if the Church had meant that, she would have said so. No such theory has been put forth by our local Church, much less by the Church universal. It has had large currency, but our standards were formulated with the express intent of disregarding it. If our proposal of the four-sided basis for Church unity had involved any such implications, those to whom it was proffered should have been instructed how to read between the lines. The bishop seems to us to admit that he goes beyond the facts to interpretations, when he speaks of "fundamental principles and *assumptions*," "*theories* of the ministry and sacraments" which "apply and protect the central doctrines of faith" (28).

The Creeds are surely as important as the ministry. But even the Bishop of Zanzibar says: "While in our communion there is an official creed, there certainly is no official interpretation thereof" (*Ecclesia Anglicana*, 10). And Dr. Headlam: "We must recognize that if we once begin to demand not merely the Catholic creeds, but an official interpretation of them, or any addition to them in any direction, we are really limiting the Creed, and thus violating the principle of Catholicity" (*Church Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1914, p. 417). If this statement be true, it must apply *a fortiori* to the ministry, and especially to *unofficial* interpretations of its significance, which as such must be regarded as "violations of the principle of Catholicity." The unexpressed conclusion of the chain of reasoning, which attaches such importance to "theories of the ministry"—which however is boldly avowed by many extremists—is as follows: the loss of the episcopate entails the loss of the priesthood; without the priesthood there can be no valid Eucharist; therefore the Holy Communion administered in a Presbyterian church does not convey the grace which the Lord associated with that Sacrament. If so, "what hath God wrought" throughout the Protestant world, apart from a "sacerdotal priesthood"! As Bishop Gore says: "To deny God's presence with them, and His co-operation in their work and ministry, would seem to approach to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (*Orders and Unity*, 184). How can we escape the inference: either Divine grace is not specifically and normally connected with a Catholic ministry, as distinguished from a Protestant; or the grace of a "valid" sacrament has no apparent effects other than those of an invalid one? The consequences of the claim that a true and regular episcopal succession is necessary to a Eucharist having the spiritual efficacy intended by Christ, are so momentous that we must ask for undeniable evidence of such a succession. The claim is simply undemonstrable.

Fruits Prove Roots

The bishop well says that Anglicanism "stands for an ideal of comprehensiveness and combination" (26). As he had previously admitted that its history included "contrasted types of Churchmanship,

which may be distinguished as Proestatnt and Catholic" (10), we might take this as a concession that the Anglican Communion is both. He urges however that "the only interpretation of it which justifies independent existence is the Catholic interpretation" (26). That indeed is a permitted interpretation within our inclusive discipline, but it does not furnish the only *raison d'être* of our position. There was a necessity for our reaction from "the one-sided development of Catholicism in the Roman Church" (26). If we were to retain real Catholicity, we were compelled to repudiate uncatholic usurpations of authority and additions to the faith. On the other hand, there was equal propriety in withholding ourselves from extreme reaction. We are not "*merely* a form of Protestantism" (24); much less are we a mere "Prayer Book sect" (25). We preserved some things which most Protestants have given up, the value of which they may be made to recognize. We stood for the principle of evolution, and perceived the wisdom of not breaking needlessly with ancient usage. As we actually have those things which the bishop deems essential to the maintenance of the Catholic organization of the Church, and as we have at the same time principles which ally us with some of the valuable affirmations of the Reformed bodies, we are privileged with an enviable opportunity of mediation. Now a mediator must partake of the nature of both; and our justification of independent existence is that we are Protestant Catholics.

Protestant Catholics

We have no doubt that this expression will be highly amusing to our friends on the other side; and we use it only as a convenient way of expressing the fact that we are in touch with both. The bishop would insist that we are Catholics; but are we not as truly Protestant? If not, we are certainly in a serious predicament. It appears that "our own religious body *flaunts* the Protestant name" (14). How the deliberate action of the Church, acquiesced in by the calm judgment of a century, can be termed "ostentatious display," we are unable to understand. Be that as it may, our name for one hundred and twenty-five years has been "The Protestant Episcopal Church." If that description be untrue, she has presented herself to the community for all that time with a lie in her right hand; and every presbyter and bishop who accepts her commission is a partaker in that lie. If this Church be not Protestant, we are confronted with this awkward alternative: either she has called herself by that name, not knowing that it was false—which is a sad criticism on her intelligence; or she has done so, knowing it to be false—which is a serious indictment of her moral character. For ourselves, we prefer to believe that she knew exactly what she was doing, and that she stated the truth. The only way to determine that truth is to appeal to her statements of doctrine; we accordingly turn to the formularies.

An Awkward Dilemma

IV

"Protestantism in the Prayer Book"

The section with this title is in the appendix, and it is not difficult to see why it was omitted from the second edition. It contains a demonstration that many of the ideas to which the bishop is devoted have been carefully excised from the Book of Common Prayer. The candor, with which he "puts together the most telling bits of evidence he knows to make a strong case on the Protestant side" (47), leaves little to be desired. He says: "From the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI were removed *all traces of Catholic doctrines* which in particular had made conservative Churchmen willing to use the Prayer Book of 1549" (46). This is strikingly true; but the fact that it is proved by the writer of the letter is still more striking. We shall let him make out our case for us.

Expurgated Section

Admits Protestantism

"The English Prayer Book was formed largely on Lutheran models, and from the beginning showed also traces of Swiss influence" (37). Three-fourths of the Office for Public Baptism are from Lutheran sources, and "about one-fourth consists of scattered portions of the Sarum Rite" (38). "The Order for Confirmation imitates the Lutheran in making its chief idea consist in the public profession of faith after catechetical instruction, and in the super-session of chrism by imposition of hands" (38)—which latter is apostolic, if not catholic. "Rejection of the Mass" seems to be made equivalent to

a denial that "the Sacraments enshrined spiritual realities" (37)—which is a quite imaginary description of Protestant convictions.

"The First Prayer Book agrees with Luther's liturgies in the capital point of negation of Eucharistic Sacrifice" (38). "Crammer's intention [was] to follow Luther's lead in obliteration of all teaching of Eucharistic Sacrifice, and even to go beyond him in denying the Real Presence. . . . That he carried out his intentions in regard to Eucharistic Sacrifice appears from changes made in the First Prayer Book" (39). "The Prayer of Consecration was changed in many ways with obvious intention to obscure, if not to deny, any idea of Eucharistic Sacrifice except as commemorative of Calvary" (40). The only sacrifices mentioned are those "of praise and thanksgiving," of "ourselves . . . a living sacrifice," of the benefits of His "oblation" and "sacrifice," and of "the remembrance of the sacrifice of His death." Even the later Reformers "were disposed to connect the sacrificial idea with almost everything in the Eucharist except the central act of offering to God the consecrated elements" (51). Cranmer rejected the phrase with reference to the "creatures of bread and wine," "that they *may be made* the Body and Blood," and secured for the First Book the words, "that they may be *unto us*." Even this, which was retained in the Scottish Office ("that they may become unto us"), was too strong for the American revisers, who substituted, "that we receiving them," etc. (41 f.). "The change made in the form changes

In Communion Office

the character of the Invocation as witness of the mystical Presence in the Eucharist. It was changed by Dr. Smith for this express purpose" (43). This "leaves only receptionist language such as Calvinists could accept," and "gives to the American Consecration Prayer an ambiguous character" (*Ib.*). "The 'Transubstantiation' which they opposed did not mean the technical mediaeval doctrine, . . . but *any teaching* that by consecration a change is effected in the Eucharistic elements, so that there is a Real Objective Presence of Christ's Body and Blood" (46).* The Church has declared that "the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith" (Article XXVIII). Also, that "such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ" (Article XXIX). Moreover, that in certain circumstances faith without reception is feeding upon Christ (fifth rubric in *Communion of the Sick*). It is clear therefore that she consistently disavows any association of a Presence with the elements.

In the Ordinal

"The Ordinal shows an equivocating tendency. Great pains were taken to retain the episcopal succession; yet pains were also taken not to lay stress on it in such a way as to displease those who did not believe in it" (43). That simply means, the method was retained

*It is a little ironical that our "Catholic" brethren should be so fond of Lutheran phraseology. "In, with, and under, the forms of bread and wine" was invented by Luther. "In the bread," and "under the bread," may be found in his Larger Catechism; "with" was added in the Formula of Concord.

in order to continue a historic fact; but that no theory was expressed regarding it. For he goes on to say: "The Church of England retained bishops, but refrained from giving full reasons for doing so." It may be doubted whether many Anglicans have attached "no importance" to historic orders (53). The rejection of a theory as to their necessity to the validity of sacraments is quite consistent with a high estimation of their value and authority. The bishop is correct in saying that there is no recognition of "a sacramentally ordained ministry" (46), of "a priesthood regarded as supernaturally absolving" (20), or of "a sacrificing priesthood" (43). "Throughout [the Ordinal] there is not one word of reference to the powers of consecration or sacrifice. The functions to which the candidates are called are becomingly described in language which exactly accords with the notion of a Protestant pastorate" (44). Thus we have in his own words the exposition of Protestant teaching in the Prayer Book.

V

"Catholic Teaching in the Prayer Book"

Inference not Proof

There is a notable difference between the section with this title and the preceding one. The evidence for the Protestant teaching is found in language which was explicitly given that form in order to express Protestant ideas. The evidence for Catholic teaching is a series of inferences and a catena of Anglican writers.

Bishops Overall, Seabury, Gore and Wordsworth, and Dr. Darwell Stone, are undoubtedly five estimable gentlemen; but surely they cannot be placed upon a level with the authorized formularies. "The Anglican claim to conform always to the teachings and standards of the primitive Church" (47) cannot be pressed to include a set of principles which the standards of the existing Church plainly disavow. The utmost that can be inferred is that there has been an ecclesiastical "tradition" which has been held "side by side" with the teaching of the Book.

It is affirmed that it was "the intention of the Church of England to maintain the *traditional doctrine* of the Eucharist" (48). But the traditional doctrine at the time of the Reformation was certainly not Catholic but mediaeval, and was as certainly disowned. If by the term is meant some ideas of the Real Presence and of Eucharistic Sacrifice, that cannot be concluded from "the retention of the ancient structure of the Liturgy and much of the ancient language" (48). For neither would have been retained if they were understood to be inconsistent with the position of the Reformers. If the Office "contained nothing which excluded belief in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist" (48), it contained no statement of that belief, and it did everything to exclude "the idea [from] the consecrated elements" (*Ib.*). Even Dr. Stone is quoted by the bishop as conceding that "the Tractarians appear to have *read into* the formularies of the Church of England that teaching of the ancient

Church with which the minds of their leaders were imbued" (50).

Again, it is inferred that our Church held to "the ancient conception of the sacramental transmission of Holy Orders" (37); and the inference seems to be based upon the determination that the three Orders "be continued, and reverently used and esteemed" (53). But the maintenance of a regular historic method is simply the endorsement of a fact; it does not connote the adoption of a theory. If the Church "has always been Catholic in theory" (16)—of course in antithesis to Protestant—why did she take such pains to omit the things which the bishop calls Catholic, and in what words did she ever express the theory? Says Dr. Headlam: "Neither the formularies of the Church of England nor, so far as I am aware, those of any other Church, lay down any theory of the ministry, and to impose, therefore, any such theory on the Church is to depart from Catholic tradition" (*Church Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1914, p. 411). The incidental opinions of High Church divines are mere *obiter dicta*. They cannot be advanced as in any way involved in phraseology which has judicial force, and which was carefully revised in order that those opinions should not be expressed. The facts enable the believer in the theories to build on them as a foundation; but they are additions to the structure, not a part of it, they have never been in any way authorized or recognized.

In order to exhibit the parallel lines of thought within the Church, the bishop says: "Cranmer is

a fact: so is Laud" (52). Quite so; but with what a vital difference! The fact of Cranmer is inwrought into the very fiber of our formularies; the fact of Laud is represented chiefly in a permitted "line of tradition" (47). He tries indeed to dispose of our "varied but inconsistent teaching" as "two sets of facts and two lines of tradition" (54). But, according to his own showing, they are not upon the same plane. The revision of the Offices, with their omissions and alterations, when illuminated by the comments of the revisers, constitutes very much more than a tradition; it is a legal statute, a definition of doctrine, an authoritative standard. The Russian critic, whom he quotes, merely concedes a "possibility of interpreting" the Ordinal in some such way as to satisfy the Eastern mind (54). The best that can be said of "the Catholic interpretation of the Anglican position" is that it is "tolerated" (34); though naturally the bishop thinks that it is "the only one that is really tolerable." The word is well chosen to illustrate the contrast: the one is tolerated, the other is authorized.

VI

A Question of Loyalty

Thus we have the claim that there are two forms of teaching in this Church, which are declared to be mutually exclusive, and are a mere "comprehension of contradictions" (54). By his own demonstration, however, what he calls "the Catholic interpretation" must be sought in the "context" of

our history and life (54); the other series of ideas is found in the clear and unmistakable *text* of our formularies. What is his attitude towards this fact? It is expressed in the following remarkable language. "The root of the trouble lies in the *constitutional ambiguity* of Anglicanism" (10). "The Church is divided as the result of an *equivocating* policy," which is described a sentence or two previously as amounting to "non-committal *evasiveness* and amiable *duplicity*" (14). And finally: "There is some ground, therefore, for the charge that Anglicanism is *nondescript* Christianity, neither fish, flesh nor fowl, but a *sort of bat* in the ecclesiastical firmament, with a bat's proverbial limitations of vision" (54). Think of it! The form of religion to which he is sworn is ambiguous, equivocating, evasive, disingenuous, nondescript, and blind as a bat!

What are we to make of all this? We can understand his irritation at finding no recognition of a "sacrificing" or "supernaturally absolving" priesthood, or of a "sacramentally ordained ministry," and other prized evidences of Catholicism. Others have spoken disparagingly of Reformed Anglicanism as a mistake which needs to be repaired. But when a bishop can thus cover with opprobium the standards by which he is to be governed, and there is a suspicion that he has many sympathizers among his brethren, why should he grow plaintive about the people's reluctance to listen to the voice of the collective episcopate? How can he ask loyalty of his clergy to what he manifestly holds in such slight

The Issue: Loyalty to the Church

esteem? He says: "When the Church gives a command, we must obey. When she adopts a definite policy, we must loyally support and further it. If for any reason this be impossible, the only way we in positions of responsibility can serve her is promptly to make way for those who can" (15). Well, her policy is Protestant, the bishop himself being witness, and it is clear, decisive and unequivocal. Is he faithful to it, and is he prepared to stand by it?

At the moment of his consecration, he solemnly promised "conformity and obedience to the doctrine . . . of the Protestant Episcopal Church." Mark you, the doctrine of *this Church*, not as he thinks it ought to be, not as he hopes it will be when his "Catholic interpretation" is restored to the text, but *as it is*. This raises serious inquiries as to the ethics of subscription. His desire to recover pre-Reformation statements is intelligible; but his attitude in the meantime to the existing definitions is not. We are quite prepared to admit that "Protestant Episcopal" is not the final word in Christianity; but it is the *present* word for our bishops and clergy. Now conformity implies agreement, compliance with principles. Does this letter exhibit any real acquiescence in the historic pronouncements of this Church? The attitude is becoming painfully familiar, though not always expressed so frankly and naïvely; but to our minds it does not cease to be portentous.

VII

An Issue Before the Church

We cannot evade the issue which the bishop has thus plainly set before the Church. We should not for a moment class his statement with the impudent propaganda conducted by the *American Catholic* and the Holy Cross tracts. But we are convinced that, if we yield to his contention, we shall have given up the key to our whole defence against them. And the bishop leaves us in no doubt as to his purpose. "We have been coquetting long enough: it is time to disclose our serious intentions" (12). The Elizabethan Settlement is only "a makeshift" (*Ib.*). "It would seem to be one of the tasks for our generation to get rid of this ambiguity and its resulting handicap" (11). "The Church must choose between" the two conceptions (16). The Catholic interpretation "ought to be more unequivocally asserted in the formularies and practices of the Church" (35). The ambiguity of Anglicanism must be "treated by some drastic remedies" (10).

Now here we have a purpose fearlessly avowed. The determination is announced of putting back into the Liturgy those things of which our fathers got rid at such cost. It is of the utmost importance that we should realize, and particularly that the laity should appreciate, this outspoken desire of ecclesiasticizing, and really mediaevalizing, the Church. Are we who sympathize with the spirit of the Prayer Book and the temper of its framers

willing thus to destroy the work of the Reformation? Are we ready to disclaim the past three centuries of our history, and revert to ideas whose tendencies are writ large in contemporary Roman Catholicism? As things are at present, the bishop obviously finds himself quite able to remain within the Church. But if his interpretations should be adopted, and so expressed as to exclude the Reformed position—and that would be inevitable—it would make the footing of those of us who loyally follow the Reformed standards no longer tenable. It is therefore a warning to us to "put our house in order." The challenge is direct and cannot be ignored. They who have such difficulty in reconciling their interpretations with the language and intent of the Offices, have reached the point where they practically claim that they alone truly represent the Church. We have no alternative but to accept the issue thus forced on us, and to endeavor to make it fatal to those who press it. So far as we are concerned, we promise to do all that in us lies to prevent the bishop's purpose from being accomplished.

The Bishop's Challenge

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